

The Semaphore

A PUBLICATION OF TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Pioneer Park Transformed

SEE PAGE 8





TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

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COVER: Pioneer Park photography by Art Peterson.

The Semaphore is a publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers for its members. Articles, except for the summary of Board of Directors' Motions, do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association or its Officers, but are the opinions of the writers of the individual signed articles. The Association can take no responsibility for their content. This membership publication is not to be reprinted or disseminated without written permission.



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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Living in a Neighborhood That Matters

I just got back from a trip to a modern American city in Arizona. Wow. Contemporary urban planning at its best? Far from it. The impression that sticks with me the most is one of endless shopping malls sprawling across the valley, each mall with pretty much the identical big box retailers and restaurants featured in the next mall and sporting acres and acres of asphalt parking lot crammed with cars. I was amazed that anyone would choose to build in that fashion. It was good for cars, lousy for people.

North Beach and Telegraph Hill, on the other hand, have frequently been lauded as among the best places to live in the country and the world. But of course we all know that. We know how unique and special this place and its history are. It's why we support the diversity of small businesses over chain stores and why we fight to protect our historic districts, our parks and trees and our squawking parrots. It's why we band together to protect a city that is Human Scale rather than designed around cars and sprawling freeways and parking lots. It's why we know our neighbors and our neighborhood rather than becoming just another faceless consumer at the mall.

But the magic of this neighborhood is that in creating a place that matters, we have also created a place where *people* matter. Live here in North Beach and you are an important part of a neighborhood fabric, here you make a difference, here you have a real impact. When I talk to all the friends and neighbors active in the community that's the response I hear the most. There are lots of ways to be involved here, and they all make a difference.



One of our directors, Joe Butler, leads recurring gardening parties in Pioneer Park around the base of Coit Tower. This is not only a fun way to spend an afternoon with your kids and friends and neighbors, but also a terrific contribution to one of our neighborhood crown jewels. Join Joe and the rest by contacting him at: fjosephbutler@hotmail.com or 776-9416.

In important land use issues, THD members on our Planning and Zoning Committee meet once a month to review new buildings and businesses that are planned for our neighborhood. Members meet with Department of Planning officials and lobby for rules that help keep the soul of our neighborhood alive. Anyone is welcome and especially those with backgrounds or interests in architecture and planning. Contact Mary Lipian at: LipianMW@aetna.com or 645-8236.

Every month we hold a Social Hour at one of our favorite neighborhood venues, complete with music and appetizers. We also schedule membership dinners and special outings to city events (such as the symphony and ball games). All of this is run by our own Pat Swan and it's easy to join in the party planning and get to know your neighbors even better by contacting Pat at: pswan@visa.com or 650-432-7031.

Many of you have celebrated Thanksgiving in the past by volunteering at one of Marc Bruno's neighborhood dinners for the homeless. Marc also produces neighborhood performances that add a real experience to the neighborhood. It was Marc that brought the Christmas tradition of the La Posada procession to Grant Avenue. Marc Bruno and Jimmy

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT *continued from page 3*

Schein (of Schein & Schein on Grant Avenue) also organized our street cleanups on Grant (something that THD was a major donor for). E-mail Marc if you have a flair for the theatric or a heart for the homeless: marcabruno@yahoo.com, he can always use another helping hand.

You know we also had an enormous amount of fun this year putting on our first "Nonna's North Beach Christmas" festival and cookie crawl. (Nonna is Italian for "grandmother.") It was only possible because of all the volunteers and bakers who came out and lent a hand (or 250 cookies!). Don't miss being a part of next year's festival when we send out the call for volunteers and bakers (or send me a note at president@thd.org now and I'll put you on the list).

We have a lot of members who work together on waterfront issues (such as development and historic preservation) on a committee chaired by Vedica Puri and Paul Scott. If you have an interest in keeping shopping malls off our piers, and fishermen and recreation on them, then contact Vedica at: vedicpuri@aol.com

If you like being part of our twice yearly movie night in Washington Square Park then you should contact our immediate past president, Paul Scott at: pdscott@sbcglobal.net

Many of you were involved in neighborhood

acquisition of the Triangle next to Joe DiMaggio playground so that we could expand that playground and renovate the library there. Well now it's time to plan the next phase and commence fundraising for the new, bigger, better (and greener!) Joe DiMaggio Playground. Contact Liz Diaz at: liz@dimaggioplayground.org

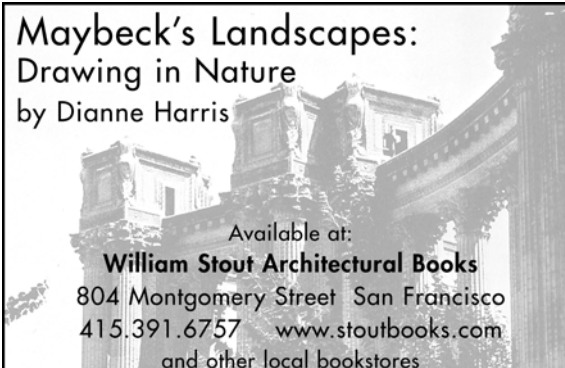
We also have neighbors with different interests and skills that support all this with website and webmaster skills, our Beautification Committee, and our financial and membership work. If you enjoy the idea of keeping a website current send me an e-mail.

All of us, and those who went before us, have created in this place a neighborhood that matters; a neighborhood that, in turn, values every one of us. It is a place worth being an active part of, it is a place worth saving, a place worth celebrating. Come and join us!



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North Beach Citizens'

Profile of NBC Client Vince Depasque

By Brady McCartney

Vincent Depasque has one of the most easily recognizable faces in North Beach. Chances are he has helped you or your neighbor move in or out of your apartment, walked and watched over your dog, cleaned up after a dinner party or festival you've attended, or simply smiled at you in Washington Square Park.

Vince arrived in North Beach five years ago after a 20 year stint in Yosemite National Park working as a waiter at the Yosemite Lodge. He has lived in various doorways and SROs (Single Room Occupancies) during his time in North Beach. Recently, though, he found and rented a room he can call his own.

During his time sleeping in doorways, Vince stayed afloat by working all sorts of odd jobs offered to him by other North Beach residents. For his first 3 months in North Beach, he more or less exclusively helped other North Beachers move things from their apartments until one day when a neighborhood dog ran into him when he was reading in Washington Square Park. The dog's owner apologized to Vince as she waited for some sort of response. Instead of getting mad at the dog or its owner, Vince started talking to the dog's owner and by day's end was watching that very same dog while its owner ran errands around the city. With this meeting, Vince began establishing himself as "the Dogfather of North Beach".

This introduction to the dog community of North Beach proved critical as it provided Vince with constant employment, several guardian angels, and more pets than anyone in North Beach or Telegraph Hill other than Mark Bittner and his "wild parrots".

Once established in North Beach, Vince

became more and more active in the community. But, he still found it difficult to get off the streets and create a consistent income stream.

Shortly after his initial introduction to NB, Vince had another critical meeting when he attended the monthly dinner for the homeless and housed at Bocce Café and met Kristie Fairchild, the Executive Director of North Beach Citizens. The two talked throughout the event and by the time the dinner ended, Kristie had convinced Vince to come to NBC the next morning. Vince showed up and, after an initial period of hesitation, began coming daily eventually becoming an active and integral member of North Beach Citizens.

However, it wasn't until Kristie strongly encouraged Vince to get his California I.D. and his social security card that things really started to change. Vince had been in a sort of no man's land without I.D., unable to rent a room or apply for any government benefits. But, after NBC applied and paid for a copy of his birth certificate, he was able to obtain a CA. I.D.—through NBC's California I.D. subsidy—and a Social Security card. The combination of these three developments then made it possible for Vince to utilize NBC's Housing Stabilization Subsidy to rent an SRO, which made him eligible for General Assistance's full benefit. Since then GA benefits



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Pioneer Park Work Party Celebrates Ten Years

By Joe Butler

A contingent of students from San Francisco's International High School swelled the ranks of neighborhood volunteers as the Pioneer Park Second Saturday Work Party celebrated its 10th anniversary in November.

Since 1995, when the first organized group of neighbors reported for garden duty on a Saturday morning, a world of transformations has occurred in the park.

Working in conjunction with the Recreation and Park Department, new stairways were planned and built, a ramp to connect the Coit Tower lobby murals to the parking lot was ingeniously designed, and the lawn on the south side of the tower was restored to better than its former glory. It is now surrounded by low rock walls and drought tolerant native plants.

A decade ago, thanks to several drought years and ever tightening city budgets, the five acre park surrounding Coit Tower was a bit down at the heels. Inadequate pedestrian circulation, overgrown Monterey cypress at the parking lot, and overuse by tourists, partiers and neighbors who had loved the hilltop park to death, all contributed to the its demise. One particularly well-connected neighbor heard rumblings that chain-link fences would be erected and she set out to

create, through a community process, an alternate vision for the park.

Ten years later we are halfway through our 20-year plan, restoring the vegetation from the monoculture of eucalyptus and cypress to the coastal scrub of indigenous ground covers and shrubs with a forest of coastal live oaks, toyons and buckeyes. With an eye toward habitat creation, the forest and its understory are already attracting the birds, butterflies and insect life that preceded us on the beautiful promontory of this fabulous peninsula. Hawks are returning, butterfly larvae are spinning cocoons, the new plants are filling the old bald dirt spots nicely.

The International High School is among many citywide volunteer organizations, coordinated by Rec Park, that have volunteered time to help with the reforestation. One of the IHS 10th graders was also present at the first work party as a kindergarten student 10 years ago. What a beautiful change in our park this decade has seen.

Thanks to Rec Park and to all who have helped.

New neighborhood volunteers are also welcome; come join us on the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon.

Contact us by e-mail at "fjosephbutler@hotmail.com".



Pioneer Park hilltop, 1995 (left) and 2005 (right)

INSIDE THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

By Art Peterson

THD's Planning and Zoning Committee has the justified reputation of doing work that is at the very heart of the Hill Dwellers organization. Yet few of our 800-plus members attend the committee's meetings to get a close-up look at the nuts and bolts of the way this vital committee operates. The report below is intended to give some insight into what happens at these first-Thursday-of-the-month sessions.

This just in: A spanking new dart board is about to be installed on the 1300 block of Grant Avenue. The new owners of that good times bar, The Lost and Found Saloon, intend to convert the facility to an Irish pub. They plan to keep the bar's entertainment license.

A rendering of the proposed new exterior of

the building was one document perused by the THD's Planning & Zoning Committee meeting at its Jan. 12 meeting.

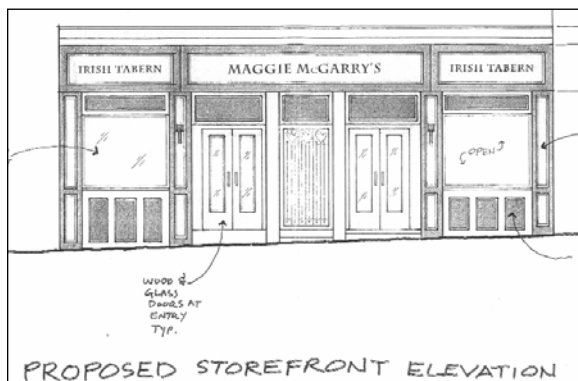
Committee members, perhaps anticipating fewer Friday night Harleys roaring away into the night, examined the plans with interest and offered a few suggestions. The ground floor windows? Shouldn't they be sound-proofed? And windows that can't be opened would guarantee that the sound of indoor revels would be less likely to intrude on the street. Members also noted the buildings exterior exhibited some cool features that should remain. The committee will invite the owners of the building to discuss their plans in more detail at an upcoming meeting.

This discussion is pretty typical of one way THD's Planning and Zoning Committee operates. Part of the committee's mission is to advocate — in discussion with owners who want to build, alter, or renovate property — for the aesthetic and community concerns of the neighborhood. The January P&Z meeting presented several examples of this process at work.

1345 Montgomery Street.

Cynthia Wilsey and Gunther Gopp have purchased the property on the southwest corner of Montgomery and Filbert, the former Dalla Torre Restaurant and, in a previous lifetime, the venerable eatery, The Shadows. The couple, with the help of their architect Doug Thompson, intend to turn this historic public location into a single family residence. Thompson and Wilsey attended the meeting, to inform the committee of their plans. Obviously, the interior work required to convert an old restaurant into to a modern dwelling is a yeoman's task. But, Thompson said changes to the exterior of the building will not be major. Two new dormers will be added, along with a garage and a roof deck, and minor changes in

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Planning & Zoning *continued from page 9*

the window configuration will be made. As often happens at P&Z meetings, neighbors were on hand to express their concern. In this case, next door neighbor Sue Cauthen was asking some worried questions about the new roof deck next to her window.

Some members of the committee considered the materials submitted for review rather sketchy and asked for a chance to look at perspective drawings and floor plans, of the renovation, as well as story poles to determine the extent of the additions to the roof.

A main issue of discussion involved the installation of a glass guard rail that will be required when the roof becomes a roof deck. Will the rail be visible from the public right away, especially the Filbert Steps? If so, will the glass railing be compatible with the character of the building? If it isn't compatible would a wooden rail be more appropriate? Well, maybe, but a wooden rail would encroach on the view of a next door neighbor, which is why the proposed rail is glass. At P&Z, not much is easy.

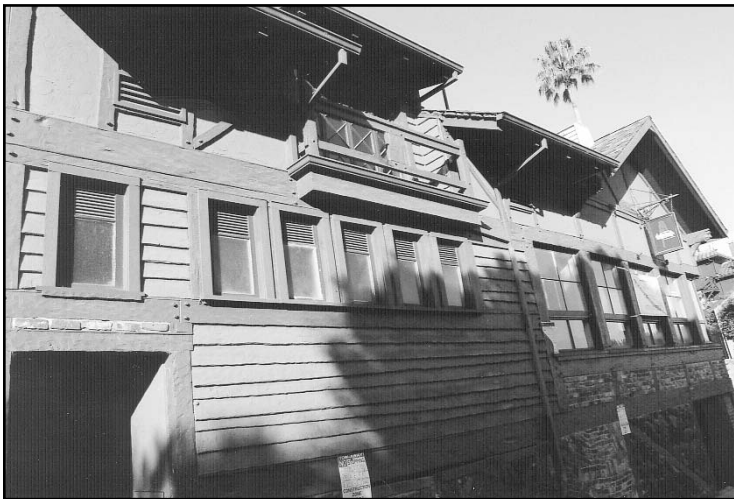
555 Green

The next presenter was Giovanni Toracca, the mover and shaker behind the renovation at 555 Green, the so called New Pisa Project, after the Dante Benedetti Restaurant that for many years inhabited the building's ground floor.

According to the North Beach-born and raised Toracca, the renovated structure will consist of an upper floor with 22 residential hotel rooms, this in a space that has remained empty for 50 years. The street level will house an oyster bar and fish market and a luncheonette serving food, beer and wine. There will be no liquor bar.

Torraca emphasized his intention to preserve the character of the original building. The stucco has been removed, high quality wooden windows are being installed, the store front awnings on the original building will be replicated, divided clerestory windows will be returned to the store fronts. Toracca said he expects the commercial sites in the building will be open in May or June. "When you are doing this kind of work," he said, "everything takes time. Right now, we are waiting for the right octagon tiles for our fish market."

Torraca's presentation left P&Z members with but one basic question: What's not to like? A few points of information needed to be clarified: Will the shutters go back up? (No) Will the sign that extends from the top floor of the building remain? (Yes.) However, the committee's excitement over this authentic renovation was almost overshadowed by another enthusiasm "We'll be able to buy fish!" one member exulted.



1345 Montgomery St.

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Bachelors on the Hill, Circa 1955

When in the mid 1950s, after graduating from Stanford and serving a stint in the army, 26-year-old Jeffery Morshead moved to Telegraph Hill, the neighborhood was undergoing a kind of bargain-basement gentrification. The artists, poets, craftsmen and bohemians who had so long been central to the scene were still around, but the landscape was also dotted with young men in suits and pert girls in hats.

Like Jeffery, these young professionals walked down the hill each day to their jobs in the Financial District. But to hear Jeffery tell it, work wasn't at the top of their agendas. What interested them most was each other, young men and women feeling their way to intimacy in the years before the sexual revolution.

Telegraph Hill, especially the area around Union and Montgomery and Alta Street (where the "Goose House gang" lived), was a magnet for these 20-somethings. According to Jeff, for a young person, getting a place in this increasingly popular neighborhood wasn't easy. He and his potential roommate Louis Nohl, a Stanford fraternity brother, couldn't find anything for less than \$100 a month. "After a month or so Louis called me and said he had signed us up for a neat place at \$60 a month. I was furious. It was just like Louis to go off and obligate me for \$60, when I was making only \$550 a month as a credit clerk at Pacific National Bank." However, when Jeff calculated half of \$60 was \$30, he decided he could do it.

"The building, 220 Union, owned by Guido Lenci, is no longer there. Lenci had taken an old narrow wooden house and carved out four units. Our apartment had one room, two beds, a partition that came down to separate the kitchen from the living area and a tiny shower and bath."

But when Jeff and Louis walked onto their deck they had vistas to rival those seen from the

digs of the most hoity-toity of San Francisco socialites. "We had a view of the waterfront from the Bay Bridge to the far tip of Treasure Island. We had a poster of all the ships' funnel markings and kept track of them coming and going below us. We nailed a wooden ladder to the deck and put a mattress on the roof where we could have cocktails, enjoying an even better view.

Spedicios (later Speedy's) Grocery was just up the street. "He allowed us to charge. I think our bills got paid eventually."

Across the street from Jeff's apartment was The Compound, an infamous hang-out of small apartments that opened onto a flat roof.

"On Friday nights, payday, we would gather at The Compound with our dates and barbeque chops and steaks."

In one of these apartments resided Bob McNear, perhaps the most desirable and notorious bachelor on the scene. Jeff's friend, Ann Seidel,



Steve Hord, right, still a Hill resident, struts his bachelor stuff.

BACHELORS, 1955 *continued from page 11*

told him of how she had arranged with the driver on the 39 bus to make a sudden stop at a certain intersection just so she could fall back into a seat next to Bob McNear and get acquainted.

Apparently getting to know Bob wasn't a particularly difficult task, as he was no shrinking violet. "At one time Bob McNear invited the shah of Iran to cocktails at the Compound and we really expected him to come, as Bob's uncle had been ambassador to Iran. But two nights before, an envoy came over to check the place out. The next day, the shah sent his regrets. We had a party anyway."

Bob, Jeff and Steve Hord, who still lives on the Hill, were all members in good standing of the "Tuesday Downtown Operators and Observers Club." According to Jeff, the club consisted of about 20 bachelors who prowled the Financial District on the lookout for a girl who met their high standards, "We would then invite our latest discovery to join us for lunch at the Canterbury Hotel, as the only female guest. It was considered an honor to be invited, so much so that today far more ladies than we could have accommodated lay claim to having been invited. There are no records."

Jeff had his own way of establishing himself with young women. "I would make fold-down bars for the ladies to replace the fold-down board separating the kitchen from the living-bedroom in those small Telegraph Hill apartments. My bar customers would pay me by giving me dinner while I worked. The bars could become quite elaborate with shelves and bamboo sidings and wheels, sometimes taking me as many as four or five

nights—and dinners—to finish."

When Jeff would get a date with one of these young women, the evening would go something like this: "I'd suggest dinner at a nice restaurant. We'd have martinis at my 200 Union place, than walk a block to The Shadows on Montgomery where, at this hour, I could count on an hour's wait. I would make no reservations, so I'd say, as if thinking of it for the first time, 'Hey let's skip this and head for The Spaghetti Factory for more of a fun evening.' This brought the evening's cost down from unaffordable to an All You Can Eat family style price tag, and, in fact, it was 'more fun.'"

Embedded in Jeff's account of young lives on the hill in the '50s is this story which says a lot about the physical longings of the young in pre-'60s America:

"How lucky could I get? The girl of my dreams (this week) invited me over to her place for dinner. Instead of the usual bobbing and weaving, she simply said, 'Come to bed, I can't wait.' Surprised—after all, she was from the east coast—I began fumbling about, but the really surprising thing was that I thought

that this young lady was the sometimes girlfriend of the previously mentioned great lover, Bob McNear. He got all the foxy ones when they arrived on the Hill. But believe me, at the moment I wasn't complaining. It was mid-afternoon, the daylight streaming in the window, and the two of us were wrestling this way and that. "Oh, Jeffory," she said in a voice suddenly devoid of passion. That was the signal. Out of the closet, highball glass in hand, emerged a smiling Bob McNear.

'Cheers,' he said."



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BROADWAY AND COLUMBUS AVENUE

Missing an Opportunity for Good Urban Design

by Howard Wong, AIA

Co-Chair, ABCT (A Better Chinatown Tomorrow)

History teaches us that there are strategic moments when good design decisions energize neighborhoods. As part of the Broadway Corridor Project, the city has plans for a mini-plaza and public art at Broadway and Columbus Avenue—specifically the corner fronting the jazz mural. Although in its early stages, conceptual drawings indicate redesign of the existing right-turn lane to create a mini-plaza with pavers and a sculpture.

Although a worthy endeavor, there seems to be a lack of a long-range vision, emphasizing sound principles of urban design and planning. When funding and opportunities are limited, design options need to be prioritized—to maximize the best catalytic ripple effects on future neighborhood patterns.

In early January, Chinatown and North Beach activists/business owners, organized by Julie Christensen, met with the Art Commission, Public Works, artist and other city officials at the Broadway/Columbus intersection. North Beach groups lamented the ebbing pedestrian traffic to Upper Grant Avenue. Chinatown groups lamented the slowdown of their northern blocks of Grant Avenue.

So, two neighborhoods, separated by a traf-

fic-congested intersection, share a common desire—to energize pedestrian circulation. On a map, at least, Grant Avenue is the north-south axis that connects Downtown/Chinatown to North Beach/Coit Tower and a multitude of northern sites. An obvious idea arose.

URBAN DESIGN PRIORITY: A direct pedestrian link between Upper Grant Ave. and Chinatown's Grant Ave.

Our organization, ABCT (A Better Chinatown Tomorrow), has been working with the City of Shanghai to construct a new Chinese Gateway at Grant Avenue, where it meets Broadway. The new gateway would be a focal point at Broadway/ Columbus—as well as complementing the gateway at Bush Street and Grant Avenue. In a Jan. 10, 2006 *Examiner* article headlined “North Beach, Chinatown Art Projects Collide: Residents Worry Piazza, Gateway Plans May Clash,” ABCT co-chair, Wilma Pang, expressed concerns about the incompatible goals of the two art projects. The headline may be a bit strong, but does highlight the need for integrated planning for the region as a whole.

Some of ABCT's major areas of concern:

- * The need for an integrated planning process, with a global outlook — including the community, city, and transportation planning...
- * The identification of urban and neighborhood priorities.
- * The need to maximize limited city funding to gain maximum benefits.
- * The compatibility of artwork with the future Chinatown Gateway, including location, design, massing ... and possible Chinese influences in artwork design.

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The Alfa Nose

With this issue, we begin a “woman about the neighborhood” feature of tidbits gathered by Kathleen Cannon and her escort, an Alfa Romeo.

One Alfa's Holiday Season

December 18: Annual THD Christmas Party at **Julius' Castle**. Even with an afternoon respite from rainstorms, there were empty seats. Everyone dressed to the 9s and ready to party. The buffet was better than ever, with views so beautiful it didn't really matter what was served. June and I sampled the roast, scalloped potatoes and cheddar biscuits, as the new chef mingled to inquire, was the banquet to our liking? What was not to like? (Only the sad shell of The Shadows and absence of the renowned mocha mousse.) Mary Jo reported Molokai, Hawaii, an excellent honeymoon spot, returning as the tanned, beautiful Mrs. Brad Willmore.

All That Jazz

December 8: Alfa's Holiday Season actually kicked off with a THD social at **Andrew Yaeger's** new New Orleans restaurant, still under the sign of the Condor. A Louisiana style buffet, tended by the charming Chef/owner himself, dark lighting, big red booths, smooth drinks; it was hit. Under Carol Doda's white piano, the New Orleans All Stars played irresistible jazz for dancing...so we

did... Jim Valente, myself in shiny heels, and his friend, Sal. Rod Freebairn Smith regaled us with Carol stories.

December 23: La Pasada: The invitation promised a virgin, a donkey, and a candlelight vigil thru North Beach. The Alfa had to see this. Organized by Marc Bruno, the event began at **St. Francis of Assisi** at 6:30pm, as a re-creation of the famous quest for lodging over two millennium ago, this time along a route from **St. Francis to Sts. Peter and Paul**. Father Harold said to follow the donkey. We tried, but that donkey was fast—Alfa said at least a 1300cc. Three Wise Men on stilts held back traffic along Grant Ave. (Who can argue with a hundred people carolling with candles, and a donkey?) The procession stopped three times as the Greatest Story was retold. At **Sts. Peter and Paul** the entire crowd, including the Wise Men still on stilts (costumes were provided by ACT), entered a dark church, breathing by flickering candlelight. Later everyone gathered in the basement of St. Francis for a lasagna dinner, compliments of **North Beach Pizza**. As I poured a glass of vino, a homeless man/organizer, said “Wait... let me get you some of the good stuff...” and unearthed/uncorked a 5 year old bottle of Classico. A lady whose father “made her practice,” played classical music on a Steinway. Father would have been proud.

The Talk of the Trieste

December 24: At the Café Trieste Saturday Recital, rumours were circulating, upsetting Papa Gianni, that the **Shrine of St. Francis** was going to close. Later I spoke with Marc Bruno who clarified matters. The shrine was not about to shut its doors. It is true the Franciscans are no longer there. As the Franciscans are a mendicant order, they were no longer able to support the facility.

continued on page 20



COOKIE CRAWLERS INVADE UPPER GRANT

By Art Peterson

There was lots of talk, but not much action. When merchants along Upper Grant Avenue would run into each other the word was, “We need to do something on the street this Christmas.”

And when THD President Brad Willmore — who has made the revitalization of Upper Grant a goal of his tenure — would drop in to chat with Kristina De Pizzol at her Delilah Crown shop on Green Street, their talk would often echo this vague notion.

Then it hit. “I got to thinking about how cookies had been a big part of my Christmas growing up,” said Kristina. “During the holiday

season, my grandma’s—my nonna’s— house always had a lot of cookies.”

Thus was born “Nonna’s North Beach Christmas.” The idea was that for four hours on Saturday Dec. 3, many of the merchants on Upper Grant and vicinity would showcase the cookie creations of the neighborhood’s amateur and professional bakers whose work would be judged in a friendly contest. Proceeds from the event would go toward the Upper Grant Avenue Beautification Fund and toward providing meals for Homeless Dinners. The cookie crawl seemed a natural fit. “Baking has always been a huge part of North Beach.” Kristina says.

The idea took off. In the end, according to Mary Jo Willmore, who coordinated the logistics surrounding the production and distribution of the cookies, nine professional and nine amateur bakers produced 6,000 cookies.

But the communal gorging that resulted was, in a way, only a by product of larger goal of the Cookie Crawl, to bring the neighborhood and the merchants together.

Said Kristina: “We had been looking for a short-term project that would not be tied to city hall, one that would call attention to what we have on our street. When the idea of the cookie crawl came up a group of us started meeting at Caffé Greco, and we raised enough money that we were able to offer Christmas lights to any business in the neighborhood that wanted them. This brought us more support.” Everyone was getting involved. In the days before the event it would not be unusual to see a merchant using downtime to stamp the crawl logo on the hundreds of bags crawlers would use to collect their treasures.

The fact that there was a stamp for the bags characterized the kind of attention to detail that



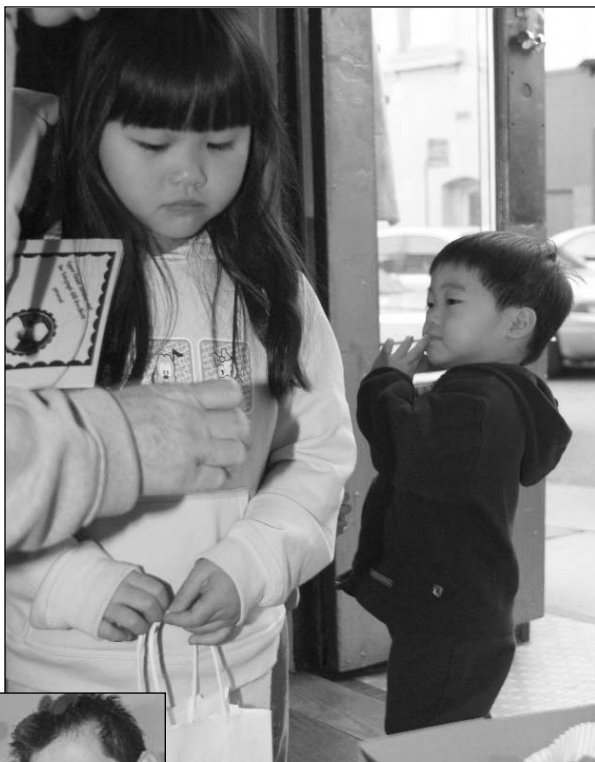
Kristina DePizzol greets a cookie crawler.

continued on page 18

COOKIE CRAWLERS INV



MADE UPPER GRANT 2006



PHOTOS BY JEAN PEDIGO. THESE AND OTHER PHOTOS OF THE CRAWL AVAILABLE FROM www.jpeditgophotography.com



COOKIE CRAWLERS INVADE *continued from page 15*

made the cookie crawl special. “We wanted a complete package; North Beach had to shine,” said Kristina. So, for instance, in a successful effort at “branding” the event, the colors red, aqua and white appeared on aprons, brochures and just about everything else.

Mary Jo Willmore gives Kristina much credit for the professional veneer of the event. “She’s an excellent designer. She put together the marketing materials including postcards and events programs as well as many creative decorations on the street and aprons for the bakers and volunteers to wear. She put in countless hours.”

But the main reason for the success of the crawl was the coordinated neighborhood effort. The Telegraph Hill Dwellers and the North Beach Merchants Association helped sponsor the event. The Hill Dwellers supplied volunteers to work the occasion; individual merchants donated, and some of the best local musical groups — Mel Sharpe’s Band, the Green Street Brass Band, the Ned Boynton Trio and The Paper Dolls — contributed to the festive atmosphere.

As to the contest that had generated a street full of munchies, Mary Jo said, “The judges had their work cut out for them. The variety of cookies was amazing and there wasn’t a bad cookie in the bunch.” But for the record, Chef Dave at Café Divine won the professional division with his Luscious Lemon cookie, and Ann Scott prevailed in the amateur contest with her cranberry-orange-oatmeal creation.

Building on the event’s success, sponsors say the neighborhood may expect another cookie crawl next holiday season.

Mary Jo commented, “I think having an event in North Beach that didn’t focus on a beer and wine tent was a really nice change. Many merchants remarked how well the day went and how nice it was not to have intoxicated shoppers.” ✂

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From the Desk of Supervisor Peskin

*"You cut me down a tree
And brought it back to me
And that's what made me see
Where I was going wrong"
—Coldplay, Swallowed in the Sea*



After months of discussion and a proposed ballot measure that was ultimately withdrawn, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation providing greater protections to trees on public and private property.

The story behind this ordinance involves, at its core, a desire by city policymakers to balance the rights of property owners with the public benefits derived from maintaining a thriving urban forest in San Francisco. The initial impetus for drafting a new law to protect trees on and around public thoroughfares came in the form of a tree not far from City Hall dubbed by Herb Caen as "THE tree in the Tenderloin".

After the longtime owners sold the property on which it was located in 2004, the healthy, 100-foot Norfolk Pine at 606 Ellis Street was removed. Supervisor Daly, who had been involved in myriad efforts to save the "spectacular" tree, then began searching for a means to prevent such tragedies in the future. By then, a broad coalition of residents, local environmentalists and neighborhood organizations formed to draft new protections for trees on private property that have great value to the general public.

At the same time, residents on Vandewater Street in North Beach were leading a long fight to save a large street tree that formed a significant part of the canopy and character on that lovely street. Ultimately, in this case, the developer prevailed and the tree was removed to make way for a new condominium project.

We all know the basic benefits of trees in an urban setting – preventing soil erosion, increasing air and water quality, and enhancing neighborhood character and livability. What many folks do not know is that of the 668,000 trees in San Francisco, only 1% have a trunk diameter of 22 inches or more. Large trees of any species

are rare here, with more than 50% of our urban forest consisting of trunk diameter of just 3-6 inches. This leaves the few large trees in our City highly vulnerable to expanding development and changing land use.

Before the new legislation was adopted, only limited public process existed to protect trees in and around public rights-of-way in San Francisco and none for trees on private land. The Board sought to craft legislation to protect the overall urban forest by enhancing the public notice and hearing process for all trees in the public right-of-way and by providing special protections for the city's large and mature trees. on public and private property with added regulations to protect the overall urban forest as well. This type of legislation is by no means unique—with Oakland, Pasadena, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Redwood City and Sunnyvale (to name a few) having legislated protections for urban trees.

A specific part of the ordinance, approved in mid-January, empowers the Board of Supervisors to designate certain trees across San Francisco as "landmark trees," and affords different enhanced protections for these extra-ordinary landmark trees based on their location. The final ordinance provides temporary protections to any tree nominated as a landmark during the legislative process

continued on page 20

THE ALFA NOSE *continued from page 14*

Now the Dominicans manage the building, but St Francis of Assisi will remain a shrine. According to Marc, with the advent of a new Archbishop, anything can happen, but closing the site is most unlikely. “Now with former Archbishop Levada second at Vatican, it would be almost impossible to close this shrine.”

Meanwhile Angela Alioto is spearheading a movement to raise money for Saint Francis. She began with the Shrine Store, stocking all items from Italy. Angela herself volunteered on Saturdays. She traveled to Italy, met with Bishops to seek special status and further consecrate the shrine to the ideals of St. Francis. There is also talk of an architectural plan that includes stained glass windows on the building front and a plaza between St. Francis and Cafe Trieste. No traffic, rather a circle of stones to ornament the middle. All conceptual thus far.

The Beat Goes On

January 13: A night when Angel Headed

Hipsters, SF Poet Laureate, authors, sketching artists and literaries met at **The Beat Museum** at the **Worms Gallery** on Grant Avenue to pay tribute to Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady and the Beat Generation that defined mid-1950's North Beach. While (son) John Cassady autographed copies of *On the Road*, I knelt by the still stunning and classy Carolyn Cassady (82 and Neal's second wife, over from England where she's lived the past 25 years.) “The Beats didn't care about politics ... they were misunderstood. It killed Jack,” she confided.

The Beat Museum—a concept of founder/owner Jerry Cimino — strives to become another literary mecca for young writers seeking the Real North Beach. Temporarily located at the Worms, the museum needs a permanent neighborhood site for Cimino's collection of Beat memorabilia, while his mobile Beat Library travels to college campuses.

Jerry's friend, Dave, who works on film productions, reported Francis Ford Coppola bought movie rights from Marlon Brando for *On the*

continued on page 22

PESKIN *continued from page 19*

so as to avoid untimely removal of a tree that ends up being designated as a landmark.

More broadly, the ordinance also establishes a Department of Public Works regulatory and fee program within the Department of Public Works to address maintenance and removal of “significant trees.” on public and private land. Included in the definition of “significant tree” is any tree located on private property within 10 feet of a public right-of-way such as street or sidewalk with either a breast height width in excess of 12 inches, a total height of more than 20 feet or a canopy in excess of 15 feet.

Comprising just 7-14% of San Francisco's urban forest, “significant” trees hold a unique and

special place in our city's character. The intent of this portion of the ordinance is to provide protection to these special trees that adorn San Francisco's streets and sidewalks, and contribute contributing to the urban environment and our neighborhood character.

The wild parrots of Telegraph Hill also played a supporting role throughout the discussions over this legislation in City Hall, providing a real-life backdrop to the importance of safeguarding our urban forest in San Francisco. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this issue or any other that may come up. I can be reached by phone at 554-7450 or by email at Aaron.Peskin@SFGov.org. See you around the hill...

Social Report, January 2006

By Pat Swan

What's more fun than being social? Try being social with your own friends & neighbors! And there's nothing to be shy about. THD's goal is to get everyone out at least once a year to a THD social event. Brad Willmore our president, has put the word out that he want us to have more fun this year, so we've started doing a monthly social. Our plan is to have these get-togethers on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, so you'll get in the habit of attending. Here's where we've been so far:

Café Divine...our first event and what a hit! We had about 40 people and listened to great tunes by Gaucho Jazz. Café Blanca...one of our favorite spots on Grant Avenue (there are so many!) where we listed to more music and had some awesome sangria. Andrew Yeager's House of Seafood & Jazz . . . together with our friends from the District 3 Democratic Club, we had great food, drinks and music from the Big Easy – there's noth-

ing like it. In February, we went to Estia Greek Restaurant . . . another of our Grant Avenue favorites. Fabulous food! In this writer's opinion, for the best Greek food & hospitality in San Francisco, just walk on down to Estia. Next came the San Francisco Brewing Company ... hosting our event, what's better than a fresh brewed beer? I can't think of a thing. Stay tuned for our March & April events.

We had our Annual Holiday Party at our good neighbor and friend, Julius' Castle, who have graciously hosted our party for over 20 years! It was a rainy, stormy day, but everyone who came out had a great time and incredible food from their new Chef. The Paper Dolls did an exceptional job of entertaining us with some holiday cheer!

Our Membership dinner on January 31st was held at Fior d' Italia – at the time of this writing this event was yet to be, but I know will be a great event at America's oldest Italian Restaurant! As you can read on their website (www.fior.com), "They aren't the best because their oldest, they are the oldest because they are the best!" We wish them much success in their new location at the San Remo Hotel.

Thank you to those of you who have attended events this year, to the rest of you – we hope to see you soon! Please call me at 415-788-SWAN if you have any questions, I travel for my job but leave me a message and I will do my best to call you back as soon as I possible.

For the record, here's the dates of our events –

September 27th: Café Divine

October 12th: Café Blanca

December 8th: Andrew Yeager's House of Seafood & Jazz with the District 3 Democratic Club

January 11th: Estia Greek Restaurant

February 8th: San Francisco Brewing Company ✦



Pat Swan and Sarah Klibin at Estia.

THE ALFA NOSE *continued from page 20*

Road...rumor is they are shooting for 2007 release. What's next: return of the original SF literary cafe, The Black Cat with Brett Harte and Mark Twain? (Better move that TransAmerica Bldg. more downtown.)

Same evening, Alfa and I ran the Columbus corridor to the Other Side of the Hill to the Dolphin Club/Explorers presentation of "A Tiny Tough Population: Planet of the Prokaryotes," ancient single cell micro-organisms that don't require oxygen— you probably know some. Fascinating slide talk (really!) If you've never seen the Dolphin Club interior (circa 1875), the wooden hulls and launch ramp... try to. Other close-by cozy interiors: the **Argonaut Hotel** lobby and **Chris Martin's Cannery Courtyard** with fire pits ablaze. From Beats to Prokaryotes in one night. What an amazing neighborhood we live in!

Alfa's Afterthoughts

A Depression Era Museum for **Coit Tower**? That's the dream of organizer Stephen Worsley and his group of 350 "Coit Depression Preservationists." Imagine a curator in 1936 garb, guided tours of the murals, related deco/depression era souvenirs. From a trinket shop to a cultural center. What would Lilly say? (Contact: sworsley@hotmail.com)



Tired of Friday nights at **Gino/Carlo's**? Take an art class at **San Francisco Art Institute**— costs less too!

Now that Will Harris, proprietor of **El Raigon Asado** on Union, has left Argentina, he owns only one ranch and 4000+ head of cattle in that country. (Note the photos of the ranch, Entre Rios, as you enter.) Due to import restrictions, Will is unable to serve beef from his ranch at **El Raigon**, but features fantastic corn fed beef on the grill—imported from Montana— as well as excellent red wines from all over.

Whatever happened to Will's next door neighbor, **The Fields**? A great space, with a cozy fireplace. Disappeared, The Fields are gone.

Welcome newest restaurant owner Dario of **Piazza Pelligrini** (Columbus/Filbert) who lived in Rome most of his life and recently moved his dream onto the Hill. Dario bottles his own olive oil..delizioso. The Faema espresso machine is top of the line and costs more than two '77 Alfa Spiders.

Alfa, an aficionado of stylish footwear and good food, reports that the Kate Spade set (and Jimmy Choo, too) are flocking to **Mangarosa** for Italian/Brazilian fare and the charm of owner Renaco Fusari. Entertainment soon to follow.

Good news from Kristina De Pizzol of **Delilah Crown**. In the last year, 16 new businesses have opened within a block of her Green Street establishment.

Finally, an informal poll of North Beach bartenders offer a glimpse of the neighborhood's favourite drinks: Classy cocktails are "in" (David/Enricos)—flavored Lemon Drops and Pommagranite Martinis. Rum is taking off — fresh lime Mojito Daiquiris. Rachael of Moose's reports Dirty Martinis, and Champagne (and Happy Hour ½ price wine). Alfa takes its Kendall Oil stirred, not shaken...for that Veloce feeling!

CONNECTIONS

With this regular feature, we hope to remind readers that there is more to being a Telegraph Hill Dweller than fretting about bad architecture and blocked views. Our organization is mainly about building community, and that means connecting with other people. So we will be telling the stories here of friendships established and relationships consummated. If you have a story of a neighbourhood connection, send it to apeterson@writingprojectg.org

Love at First Fall

by Kathleen Cannon

At the 1987 THD General Meeting, I walked toward the bar of the Basque Restaurant, tripped over a chair and fell in love.

Literally I fell ... knocked over several chairs Hill Dwellers had tipped to save their places at the long family style tables...glasses, plates, silverware flew...and, as I righted myself, very embarrassed, several men approached to help. Last, but not least, was a tall, dark haired man with soft brown eyes and a perfect nose. He wore a black mock turtle neck sweater and an equally soft coat, I sensed cashmere in the coat, the eyes and the person.

"You could probably use a drink now?" he asked.

I had been en route to meet Sue, but she could wait.

I can't recall what I said, only that he offered me a glass of white wine and we exchanged likes/dislikes. I rode my bike over GGB to Sausalito on weekends. He liked to ride. Art... Pop...we'd both subscribed to Andy Warhol's, Avant Garde! Music: all kinds. I was editing the Semaphore and he contributed drawings.

He said he drew pictures of buildings, Zeman Architectural Design and Rendering. His studio

was above the Old Ship Saloon. I asked for his business card and received a tiny scrap of paper with a phone number ... with great printing.

The General Meeting began. I gave a brief report, took a deep breath and left.

That was the longest Thanksgiving. I ran home and checked messages... he'd called... invited me to Tomasso's and to a Pink Floyd concert.... and, we never looked back.

We biked thru the Presidio, saw another Pink Floyd concert (10 years later), the SF Ballet and The Stones, France and Italy, twice. We drove to the Aspen Design Conference.... across country ... to Eastern Canada and Virginia. Falling Waters, Montecello and Graceland, all on one video tape: Paid attention to American residential architecture.

We fought like minks over popcorn... but never missed the Film Noir festivals, He adored Robert Mitchum, all old San Francisco films... silly b&w love stories made him cry. I came home one night to find the 30 foot wall in my condo painted orange. "Frank Lloyd Wright Mesa Red". It is still there.

But Rodger passed away... suddenly... one day while I was at jury duty, He was only 56. There was a funeral at Sts. Peter and Paul's and a wake at Capp's Corner (We'd attended Herb Caen's at Moose's.) There were two memorial art shows.... the American Institute of Architecture and Pier 23. (He designed the deck.). He always drew and designed on napkins over lunch, from Shorenstein buildings to "new" Union Square concepts. I hung poster invitations all over North Beach and invited THD. Other SF places we frequented remembered him—from Lefty ODoul's to Tadich Grill, to Schroeders. The architectural designs and drawings were part of a

continued on page 26



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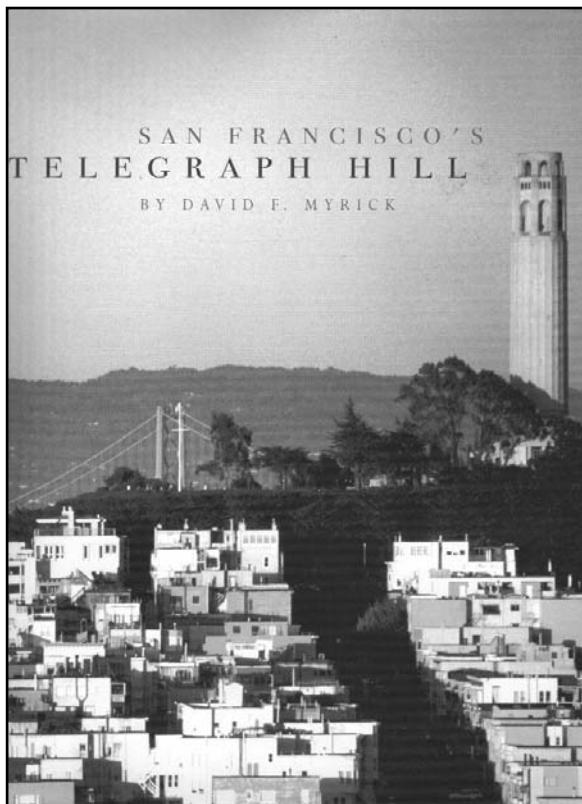
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PLANNING & ZONING *continued from page 10*

199 Chestnut

Representatives from the condominium at 199 Chestnut attended the Dec. 2005 P&Z meeting some time ago to describe the design for an exterior elevator, which would serve only the top floor unit of this building. They submitted a drawing representing the changes to the building. Some P&Z members thought the architects could do better. How about hiding the ventilator cap on the top of elevator with a compatible architectural feature? How about some design features to break up the blank walls? For the Jan. 12 meeting, the elevator architects tried again.

They submitted a new plan which, while probably not a candidate for an *Architectural Digest* award, was enough of an improvement that P&Z, while not supporting the construction, would not oppose it, particularly because at the time of the meeting the project proponents reported that no neighborhood opposition had emerged.

1620 Montgomery

Meanwhile, a larger battle appears to be brewing around the plans for demolition and new construction at 1345 Montgomery, a 1907 building that has served as the work place for artists and architects, including Laurence Halprin. The structure (the old Del Monte Milling Company Building) is one of 10 that the Landmarks Board will consider for designation as a City Landmark this year.

However, developer, owner, architect Theodore Brown has other ideas. Speaking to the committee, Laurie Cowen, active in a group at

the Parc Telegraph Development that is opposing the project, said that Brown's plan to replace the existing structure with a nine-story condo is unacceptable to her group. Their objections to the development include the potential destruction of an historic building, exacerbation of existing traffic problems and the impact on views, not only at Parc Telegraph, but also at 101 Lombard and Telegraph Landing.

Responding to Cowen, committee members said they would need to know much more about the proposed development before THD could take a position. The suggestion was made that Brown or his representative be invited to an upcoming meeting, and also that the architectural historian working on the landmark designation for the structure report be encouraged to present to the committee. Further, the committee suggested that the various groups in opposition to the development organize a unified front in order to better promote their message.

This was the first Planning and Zoning Committee meeting I have attended. I left with the general impression that for those intimately interested in the future of the neighborhood, this is where the action is, and where residents who care about their neighborhood can make a difference. This feeling seems to be shared by those dedicated THDers who turn out once a month for these lively, informative and important meetings. You are invited to join them on the first Thursday evening of each month. Call one of the committee co-chairs to find out more.

Jeanne, Milligan, 563-3494

Mary Lipian 391-5652



Connections *continued from page 23*

30 year body of work... and were very much art.

Rodger designed the current THD logo. There was a wonderful presentation dinner at the

New Pisa Restaurant, which made him very happy. He had won competitions before, but this one was special. Thank you.



North Beach Citizens *continued from page 7*

have been discontinued, but he has continued to stay afloat by continually piecing together work. When asked, Vince credits NBC and its persistence for his return to the ranks of the housed: "They pushed me to get I.D. and my Social Security card. And then got me indoors."

Vince continues to work 20-30 hours a week: "I don't care what it is. I don't care if it's 3 o'clock in the morning." And, in his spare time, he works on making his new room into a home.

Vincent Depasque slipped through the cracks, but with a little bit of encouragement and

aid, he was able to reclaim his life, so much so that he recently contacted his father, mother, and sister for the first time in 14 years.

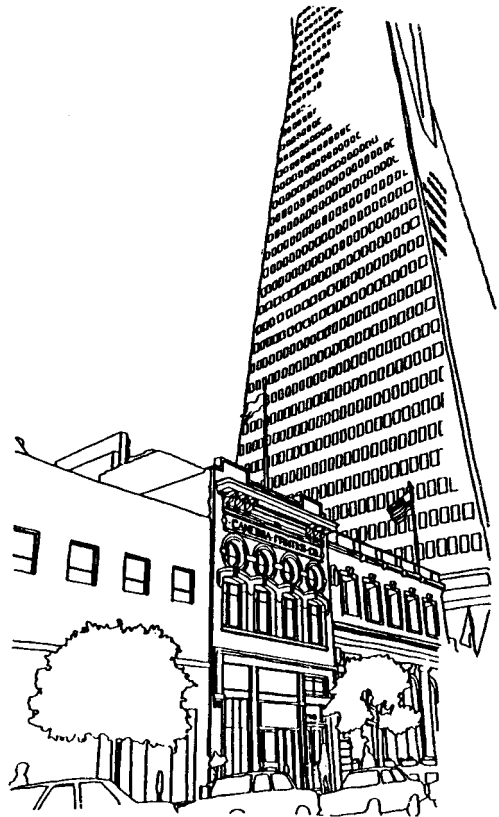
"It brings tears to my eyes," said Andrea Kaye, one of Vince's friends and a resident of North Beach, "Watching his transformation, he's come from living on the streets to putting up a towel rack in his closet...The community should be proud of Vince, itself, and North Beach Citizens."



GOING SOLAR?

Thinking of going solar but not sure where to start? Come to a talk by Eric Nyman of Sun Light Power and Electric on March 21, 2006 at the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center, 660 Lombard. Mr. Nyman will explain how solar power systems work and talk about the financial and environmental benefits. He'll also provide information on the substantial rebates being offered by the California Energy Commission and a new \$2,000 tax credit being offered by the federal government. Details on a possible group discount for THD members will also be provided. For more information, contact THD's Environmental Committee Chair Paul Scott at pdscott@sbcglobal.net

—THD Environmental Committee



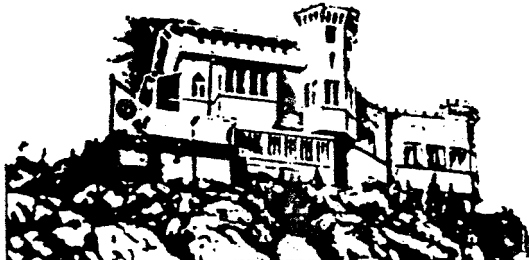
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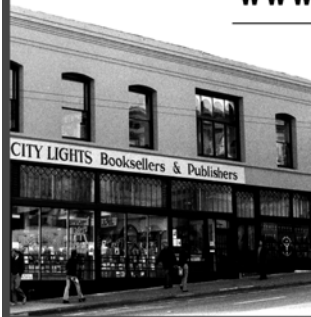
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THD Board Motions

FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER 2005

September: NO MOTIONS

October, 2005

MOTION: "The Telegraph Hill Dwellers support the proposed ordinance currently being considered by the Board of Supervisors to restrict park events which would limit public access to a park to no more than one day."

The Motion passed.

MOTION: "While we support the concept of neighborhood planning the Telegraph Hill Dwellers strongly opposes the legislation entitled 'Good Neighborhoods Plus' in its current form and will offer constructive comments to change it."

The Motion passed.

November, 2005:

MOTION: "To allow THD to sponsor the 1st Annual Nonna's North Beach Christmas event at a cost of \$1500 from private donations received by THD."

The Motion passed.

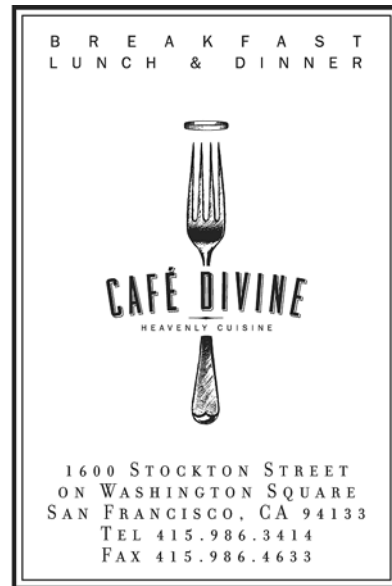
MOTION: "THD endorses the proposed legislation for publicly financing mayoral elections in San Francisco."

The Motion passed.

MOTION: "THD supports evaluating the possibility of creating a public piazza on Vallejo Street between Grant and Columbus."

The Motion passed.

December: NO MOTIONS



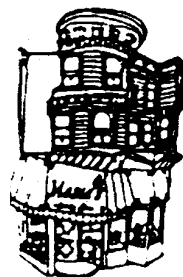
Breakfast &
Lunch
7 days a week
7:30-3:30

**PAT'S
CAFÉ**

Dinner
Fri & Sat

**2330 Taylor Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
415-776-8735**

Home Style Cookin'



Mama's
on Washington Square

Debra & Michael Sanchez

1701 Stockton St. S.F., CA 94133
Phone: 415-362-6421



For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

THD Welcomes New Members

September 2005 to October 2005

Michael Accardi, Leon & Helen Luey, Gail Maderis, Walid Mando, Robert Sheridan, Richard Shouse, Evelyn Urbais, Keith Gorlen & Carol Weisner, James Amdur, Jane Swindon

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL: _____

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$25 _____ Household \$40 _____

Senior (age 65 and over) \$15 _____

THD Wish List

Can you help us with any of the following items?

• Stamps, stamps, stamps • Office/PC paper
• Business window-envelopes • PC laptop •
Tape Recorder(s) • Transcribing machines • Flat
file (for maps, posters, lg. flat printed materials)

If so please contact Sarah at: (415) 781-2278
(press # if message) or e-mail Sarah: member-
ship@thd.org Thank you so much!

Fog Hill Market

Hanna Chedyak

415-781-8817

1300 Kearny

San Francisco, CA 94133



SAN FRANCISCO'S
MOST AWARDED PIZZA

FAST FREE DELIVERY

433-2444

PIZZA, PASTA, ENTREES
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italian language, cinema, opera lyrics, history,
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sem.a.phore

DEFINITION: To convey information using visual signals, such as flags, lights and mechanical arms.

In the 19th century, Telegraph Hill was a lookout spot. A man stood at the top and watched for ships arriving through the Golden Gate. He used semaphore signals to spell out ships' names to the people below who were waiting for goods and mail. Neighbors who formed Telegraph Hill Dwellers in 1954 named their newsletter to salute this early use of the Hill.

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS
P. O. BOX 330159
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133

THD CALENDAR

Second Saturday stair and garden work parties at Pioneer Park: March 11, April 8 and May 13. For more information call 552-7774.

Check THD emails for social calendar updates

Schedules of Committee Meetings

PLANNING & ZONING: First Thursdays. Call for time and location.
986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

**For more information, log on to
<http://www.thd.org>**

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